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SUBJECT: Still no details on revised Canadian ITER bid

1. In December 2002 during the 7th ITER Negotiations meeting in Barcelona, the Canadian delegation announced that in light of the competing proposals made by the European Union and Japan to host ITER, it would reassess its offer with a view to indicating a revised position early in 2003.

2. The Canadian delegation had noted specifically that, "the Canadian offer to host had a diminished chance of success given current developments in the negotiations unless the Government of Canada agreed to participate financially in the project." At that time the Canadian negotiators anticipated a revised offer by the end of March 2003. As of early May, however, no announcement has been made.

3. To determine when Canada's revised plan might be available Emboff spoke with officials at the Department of Natural Resources (NRCan) and Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAIT).

4. Serge Bernier, Senior Policy Analyst in the Economic and Fiscal Analysis Division at NRCan told Emboff that NRCan Minister Dhaliwal has discussed ITER with his federal cabinet colleagues and is presently leading discussions with senior ministers of the Ontario provincial government about the ITER bid. Details regarding the discussion are however, lacking. (It should be noted that Jim Campbell of NRCan, who was Canada's head of delegation to ITER negotiating meetings, retired from government service at the end of April. Bernier is now acting in his stead, although we understand that Campbell may well continue to attend ITER meetings as a contract employee of NRCan.)

5. Dave Church, Senior Policy Advisor with the Science and Technology Division at DFAIT told us that he anticipates details of Canada's renewed bid will be made public at the June 19th "P-1" meeting.

6. Comment: Although Church and Bernier appear hopeful that Canada will present a new and attractive bid, Church acknowledged that the European Union and Japan are many laps ahead in the race to host ITER, while Canada's bid remains in the pits for an overhaul. To overtake the other proposals and become a front-runner Canada's bid would have to include significantly greater federal commitment and a federal investment far larger than the C\$3million the GoC provided in 2000. Our perception is that achieving these objectives will be difficult, at best. End comment.

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